

[By Susan Allen, Barre Montpelier Times Argus](#)

Rep. Peter Welch spent the morning in Montpelier, talking about health care and other issues with residents during a "Congress in Your Community" meeting and presenting \$150,000 to the Community College of Vermont for its job training program.

The congressman also visited the Twin Valley Senior Center in Marshfield.

"CCV is about hope in the future," Welch told a roomful of students, faculty and business people gathered at the College Street office for the presentation. "You are the future. You are going to bring the economy around."

The federal grant will be used to expand CCV's Career Readiness Certificate Program, which teaches hard business skills like mathematics and spreadsheets, as well as so-called soft skills, such as resume writing, job interviewing techniques, teamwork in the workplace, and more.

The 10-week program serves unemployed people seeking jobs, as well as those with employment who are trying to move up within their field or company.

"I remember having to do a resume ... I remember being nervous about it," the Vermont Democrat told the group. "I don't care if you're going out as a lawyer. It takes a lot of will to step across that threshold and say you want to be part of the workforce."

He said it's important for potential employees to prove they have the skills, particularly in this economy.

"These are tough times. It's tough," Welch said. "Anytime we can help kids get an education, that's a wise use of taxpayer money that just comes back to everybody."

In its first year, the program has served 138 Vermonters and is offered at CCV's Barre/Montpelier, Upper Valley, St. Johnsbury and Brattleboro sites. CCV Interim President Joyce Judy said about 12,000 students attended the community college this year, with enrollment increasing about 10 percent annually in recent years.

Some Vermont businesses, including Green Mountain Coffee Roasters of Waterbury, have partnered with the Career Readiness Certificate Program to provide training for employees.

GMCR supervisor Mike Vasseur said the program has been so useful that the company is working with CCV and Global Corporate College to offer the training at its other sites around the country.

Everette Fluery of Waterbury, who works at Green Mountain Coffee Roasters, said he participated in the program and learned, among other skills, public speaking. Fluery said he graduated from high school, but did not go on to college, which made the CCV training program especially important.

"You have to have a good education to make excellent money," he said. Fluery said CCV's certificate program helps Vermonters move up from "begging for a job" to working toward a career.

Welch also held one of his regular "Congress in Your Community" gatherings with residents during an hour-long meeting at La Brioche Bakery & Café on Wednesday morning. About 40 people attended and asked the congressman about everything from energy efficiency to education.

Among those meeting with Welch were New England Culinary Institute founder and CEO Fran Voigt and the school's new President Robert (Skip) Myers.

"People really keep wanting us to get ahead on health care," Welch said after the meeting. He

said Vermonters are frustrated with the partisan stalemate that has led to inaction on that issue. "They're appalled by that."